

American Dealer

The Next Generation in Auto Dealer Information

Wheels Within Wheels Within...Cox Enterprises??

When your average layman hears the name "Cox," he most likely thinks of "Cox Communications," the third-largest cable-TV/Internet provider in the United States, or "Cox Media Group," owner of 15 TV stations, 86 radio stations, and over a dozen newspapers as well as Cox Target Media/Valpak, one of the largest direct marketing and coupon companies in the country. *Both* operations are major subsidiaries of Cox Enterprises, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.

So, what does that have to do with automobiles? Well, as some car dealers are aware, Cox

Enterprises also owns Manheim Auto Auctions, which was established in 1945 in Manheim, Pennsylvania, as a wholesale vehicle auction operation. Cox Enterprises acquired the business in 1969 and it has grown in the years since to become the largest wholesale auction company in the world, handling nearly 10 million auto transactions in 2010 alone at a value of \$50 billion.

And who hasn't heard of Autotrader.com, America's largest online auto classified

marketplace, with over 15 million hits per month? Started by Cox Enterprises in 1998.

And everybody knows of Kelley Blue Book, premiere provider of wholesale and retail "Blue Book" pricing, originally founded as the Kelley Kar Company by Les Kelley back in 1918. What some people might not know, however, is that

Kelley Blue Book was purchased in December of 2010 by... Autotrader.com. Which means: Acquired by Cox Enterprises.

Nor does it stop there. Vauto, creator of the "Live Market Suite" auto lot

management software, successor to the Manheim "Tracker" program? Formed in 2005 by Cox Enterprises.

And more: VinSolutions, formed in 2003 to provide end-to-end web-platform solutions for franchise and independent car dealer lots? Picked up by Autotrader.com in June of this year. And, of course, Autotrader.com is owned by...Well, you've got the idea by now.

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Sign Seen At A Used Car Lot:

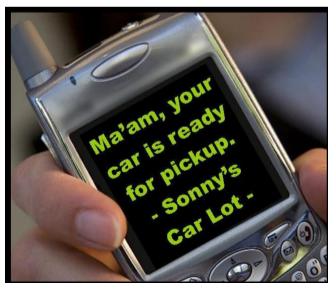
**Want To Get On Your Feet Quick??
-- Miss A Payment!**

New V3 DMS Features: Text And Email Messaging

Text and email messaging, two technologies anybody who owns a cell phone knows about and uses these days, have now been integrated into several of the V3 DMS modules.

V3's latest version, 11.72, includes these features in the following modules: Pending Deals, Buy Here Pay Here, Reports, Service and the Customer Relations Module (CRM).

"A lot of these customers are high-risk buyers," said Martyn Olliver, founder of Skywerks, "and the dealers naturally want to maintain contact. The new features bring the latest communications technologies into play for them to use simply and easily,



providing the dealers with the newest levels of contact capability."

When a deal closes or undergoes some kind of modification, for instance, the dealer can update the client in the Pending Deals module by simply sending a text message or email, instantly appraising the potential buyer of the new information: "Hi, Tom here from Sonny's Car Lot. Your finance percentage has been approved!"

And, for dealers running the Service module as

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We're Back!!

ITS BEEN TEN YEARS BUT WE'RE BACK!! American Dealer is the advertising arm for Skywerks.com. We're back to give the car business and our loyal customers information on the issues and progressions happening in today's society of car dealerships. We'll cover topics that relate specifically to the Pacific Northwest: from the minds of consumers, to killer deals, to problems and challenges dealers are facing in today's ever-changing market environment. If you have any questions, call Skywerks Support at 866.534.3194 or send an email to support@skywerks.com.

The "Coming Soon" Section:

V3 DMS To Integrate With Washington State "E-Temp" Operations

Tired of re-typing all that information for a Washington State "E-Temp" permit? Not for long...V3 will soon interface with the DMV to pre-populate those fields for you. Because Skywerks knows **what** you need the most, **when** you need it the most.

Cox Enterprises - Continued From Page One

So, to recap: Cox Enterprises, an extremely large company with billions of dollars of assets (Anne Cox Chambers, principal owner of Cox Enterprises, was estimated by *Forbes* magazine last year to have a net worth of \$12.4 billion, placing her as the 20th-richest person in America), now owns: Manheim Auto Auctions, Autotrader.com, Kelley Blue Book, Vauto and VinSolutions. Companies that, between them, cover nearly every aspect of auto purchasing and car-lot management : Auctions and sales, Internet web sites and platforms, wholesale and retail pricing estimates, dealer management software, and information accumulation and dispersal.

Cox Enterprises, obviously, has moved into the auto sales market in a huge way. Is Cox merely buying and running that which works and makes money - or, as it would have been referred to in the old days, is Cox attempting to "gain a stranglehold on the market"?

A good question, and one that deserves some research and answers, for the implications for car-lot dealership management are profound. While a study of any such attempts to "corner the marketplace" in other sectors of the

economy in American history always demonstrates that they ultimately fail, with thanks to free-market competition, and generally end up merely providing consumers with better deals at better prices, the fact remains that such an attempt would represent an enormous upheaval in car lot sales operations. Billions of dollars would find themselves being re-aligned along different spending channels

than would be the case in the "normal" market - at least in the short term. Spending channels dictated largely by Cox Enterprises and not the normal free flow and interplay of standard market forces.

One could take the tack, of course, that Cox's tremendous presence in the field of auto sales and car-lot management, *itself*, represents nothing more than the

functioning of those very market forces at work. Markets, after all, are not a static phenomenon; they constantly change and adjust themselves to altering conditions such as technology improvements, modified customer demands, government interventions into the field ("Cash For Clunkers"), and a host of other factors. Bigger *is* sometimes better, and maybe the car-lot economy is simply proving itself to be such.

Still, for the more far-sighted dealers concerned with the bigger picture and not just what occurs on their lots today or next week, Cox Enterprises bears watching: And rest assured that Skywerks and American Dealer *are* watching, and that we will inform you of developments as these trends continue to evolve. So, keep your eyes peeled and stay tuned!

The "Unabashedly Stolen From The Internet" Department



REDNECK SWIMMING POOL - When economic times are tighter than the skin on a grape, one finds the need to improvise, adapt and overcome. By the way, Sonny - the South LOST. Get over it.

Text And Email - Continued From Page One

another example, a status update to the client is only a click away: "Ma'am, your car is ready for pickup."

The Buy Here Pay Here module, additionally, can now run a daily A/R report that not only dumps the data to your printer and screen, but also automatically disperses a series of texts or emails as well: "Hello, just a friendly reminder, your car payment is due today."

"V3 now also offers a custom reports capability in the Reports module that a dealer can design as they wish," said Olliver. "Such as, a report that isolates all of his buyers who now have expired warranties: "Hi, we'd like to talk to you about a warranty extension if you have an interest."

The messaging functions also apply to the CRM, which can track such data items as birthdates, end-of-service contracts and finance contracts, to name a few. All of these functions, and more, can be automated or deployed manually to update a client via text

Taurus at the auction, top price of \$3,500.").

"About half of the dealers now have the updated software," Olliver said. "The new version 11.72 V3 DMS does require a manual update, but I've got an incredible team of people out there handling it just the way it needs to be handled."

"We used to do our updates via FTP," Olliver continued, "but ongoing firewall and blockage issues over that port have caused us to switch to full web update services through the web browser instead, and the new software contains those updates as well."

The "Best Bumper Sticker Of The Month" Department



messaging or email.

And, finally, a stand-alone module has been created to allow V3 users to send out custom texts as desired ("Rob, buy the 2010 Ford

Text messages generated through the V3 DMS program will cost 15 cents per text, but email sends are completely free.